

ROBERT BURNS - ITINERARIES



Itinerary 1 - The Beginning at Alloway

Estimated Time - Full Day

Burns Cottage and Museum

Map Ref: 10

Burns Cottage - a small white house standing by the roadside in Alloway - is the place where it all began for Scotland's most famous poet, Robert Burns.

He was born in the house in 1759, and thanks to careful restoration over the years, the cottage today is much as it would have been in Burns' time - except that it would have been surrounded by fields and a good few miles outside the main county town of Ayr.

There's an audio-visual presentation in the cottage itself, telling the poet's life story, and of course, there's a chance to look round the house and perhaps wonder that such humble surroundings fostered the great talent that Burns had.

Adjacent to the cottage is the museum which contains some important Burns manuscripts, including a rare copy of the first Kilmarnock Edition of his poems. There are also a number of Burns artefacts and displays which set his life in its historic context: his contemporaries, for example, included Mozart, Beethoven, and the artist JW Turner. On the political scene, the American War of Independence, and later on the French Revolution had a huge impact on world politics of the time whilst in Britain, the madness of King George was a major concern.

The Burns Cottage and Museum, as well as the National Heritage Park not only tell the story of a great poet, but open a window on a fascinating period of history.

Telephone : 01292 443700

Open all year Apr-Sept, Mon-Sun 09.00-18.00
(Oct-Mar, Mon-Sat 10.00-16.00, Sun 12.00-16.00)



Tam O' Shanter Experience

Map Ref: 10



The Tam O' Shanter Experience is just down the road from the Burns Cottage and Museum in Alloway and is part of the Burns Heritage Park.

The centrepiece is the innovative and unusual audio-visual presentation that brings to life 'Tam O' Shanter'; arguably one of Burns' most famous poems.

The raucous adventure begins when Tam, rather the worse for drink, decides to wend his weary way home. Passing Auld Alloway Kirk, he sees a strange glow from within the church windows; his curiosity gets the better of him, and stealing up for a closer look, he sees witches and warlocks dancing about. One young witch in particular, Cutty Sark, catches his eye: as she finishes her dance he shouts out in admiration. But he startles the strange band, who begin to chase him.

Hotly pursued by the witches, Tam struggles back onto his horse and makes good his escape, heading for the Brig O'Doon, with the ghouls closing in behind him with every step. As he nears the Brig, one of them grabs the tail of his brave mare Meg, and although witches can't cross the river, she holds on and pulls the horse's tail off altogether. Tam, however, has had a narrow escape.

The Tam O' Shanter Experience also has a 'Taste of Burns' Country' restaurant and a gift shop selling quality Scottish merchandise.

Telephone : 01292 443700

Open all year Burns Monument & Gardens, Open Apr-Sept, Mon-Sun 09.00-18.00
(Oct-Mar, Mon-Sun 09.00-17.00)

Alloway Kirk, Auld Brig O' Doon, and The Burns Monument

Map Ref: 10



Just a stone's throw from the Tam O'Shanter Experience is the Auld Alloway Kirk, where Tam saw the witches and warlocks dancing in an eerie glow. In real life, the Church is the burial place of the poet's father, William, and is occasionally the setting for readings and re-enactments of the poem.

Also nearby is the Brig O'Doon. The elegant single span bridge pre-dates Burns by several centuries, possibly dating from the 1200s. The walk to the bridge where Tam made his lucky escape from the witches, takes you through landscaped gardens from which you can look up to the Grecian style Burns Monument. Built in the early nineteenth century, this is a lasting commemoration to the poet's life and work, and the grand, domed building, looks down on the tiny cottage where Burns' days began.

Rozelle House, Alloway

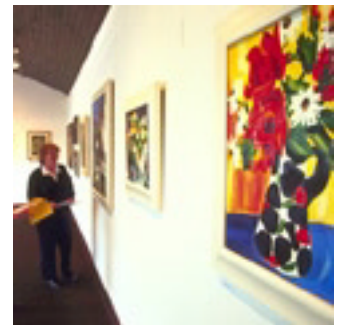
Map Ref: 10

Rozelle House is one of those 'finds' that one always hopes to come across on holiday.

The eighteenth century mansion is set in spacious gardens and is home to South Ayrshire Council's art collection.

As well as some local memorabilia, it houses the Goudie collection of paintings illustrating Robert Burns' poem, Tam O'Shanter. Rozelle's stable block has been converted into the Maclaurin Galleries which contains touring exhibitions as well as its own collection.

There's even a craft gallery with various unique pieces of artwork on sale to the public.



Telephone : 01292 445447

Open all year, Mon-Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun (Apr-Oct 14.00-17.00)

Souter Johnnie's Cottage

Map Ref: 16



If you have time, Souter Johnnie's cottage is well worth a visit. The route to it is along the beautiful coast road. The journey, which passes castles and landmarks, offers stunning views of Arran and Ailsa Craig, and on a clear day Northern Ireland can be seen in the distance.

If it hadn't been for Robert Burns, John 'Souter Johnnie' Davidson would have slipped into obscurity. His friendship with the poet has earned him a place in history, and his home in Kirkoswald is now a museum owned and managed by the National Trust for Scotland.

Built in a similar style to the cottage where Burns was born in Alloway, it contains Burns memorabilia and an exhibition of shoemakers (souter's) tools of the time. Its rooms are laid out very much as they would have been when Burns was a frequent visitor there - no doubt carousing with his friends in the manner for which he is famous.

Telephone : 01655 760603

**Open 1st Apr - 30th Sep, daily from 11.30-17.00,
Oct weekends 11.30-17.00. Last admission at 16.30**